



PART ONE

Interstate School of Correspondence
Chicago

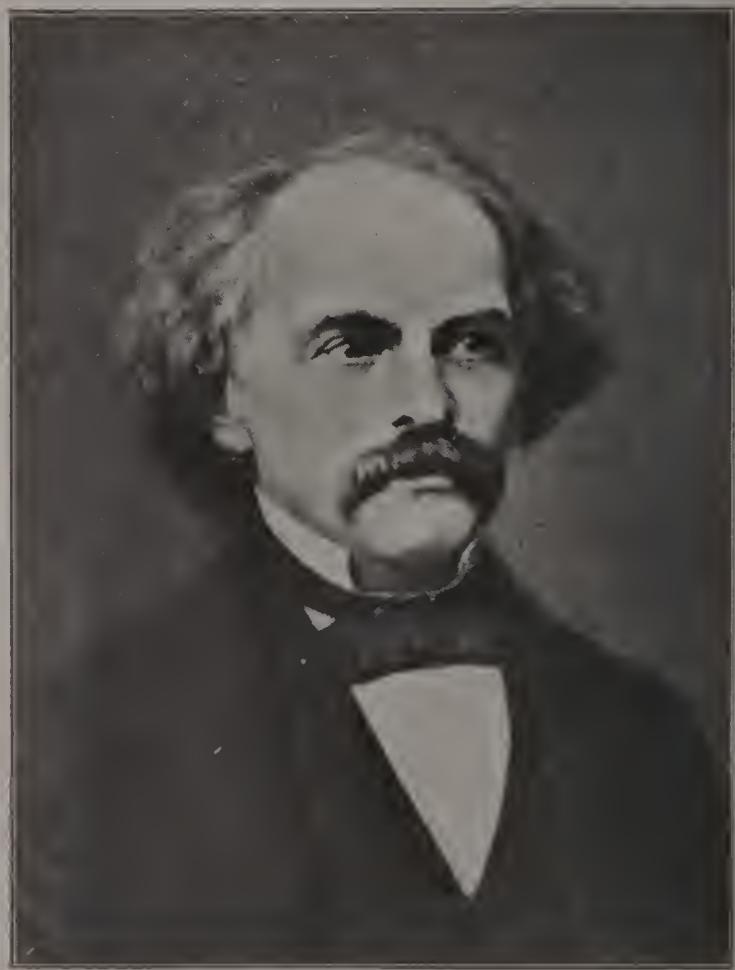


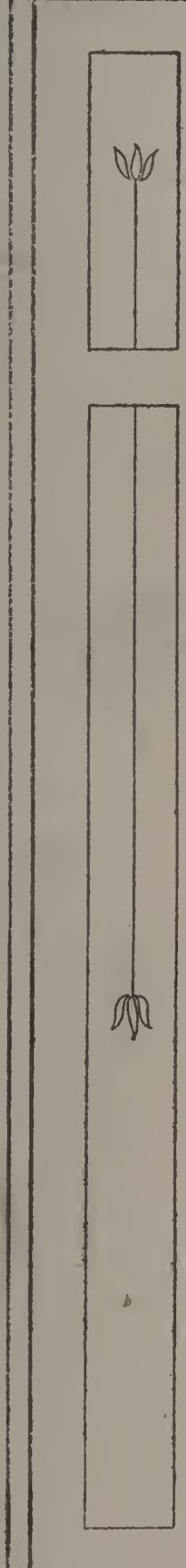
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ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE

A CORRESPONDENCE
COURSE IN LITERARY
CRITICISM, INTER-
PRETATION AND
HISTORY



By C. H. SYLVESTER

*Formerly Professor of Literature and
Pedagogy in the State Normal
School at Stevens
Point, Wis.*



INCLUDING NUMEROUS
MASTERPIECES



IN EIGHTEEN PARTS
PART ONE, FICTION

CHICAGO

INTERSTATE SCHOOL OF
CORRESPONDENCE

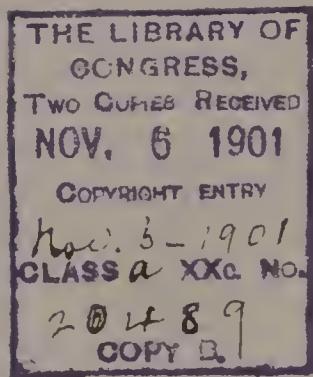


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Preface

THIS course of study grew out of class-room experience in which teacher and student were in daily conversation. To adapt it to the needs of those who study at home has been no light task. How well it has been performed the students will determine. The attention of the casual reader is directed to the fact that no one of the parts is complete in itself, that all must be considered as parts of a whole, and that correspondence lessons between teacher and pupil are integral and important factors of the course.

To make manifest some of the beauties which the hasty reader passes without recognition, to assist in giving the power to interpret the great things which great men have written, to teach something of the causes and growth of the literary power as shown in its history, and to create a genuine and abiding interest in the various forms of good literature, are the aims of the course.

As a basis, many selections have been made from the writings of noted authors. In the choice and arrangement of these masterpieces

Preface

it has been remembered that enjoyment is an essential part of profitable reading; that this is promoted if at first acquaintance the student confines his attention to salient points of interest and leaves the deeper significance and more delicate beauties for future studies.

The course naturally divides itself into parts which are treated in the following order: fiction; essays; orations; lyric poetry including songs, odes, elegies, and sonnets; epic poetry; the drama; the literary powers manifested by great writers; and the history of English and American literature. The history has been deferred to the last, and then is presented in such a way as to involve a chronological review of the entire course. Each part contains notes on the authors quoted, and critical comments on their works. These are intended rather to create an interest in the authors, than to serve as biographical sketches.

The selections from Holmes, Emerson, Longfellow, Lowell, and Whittier are used by arrangement with and permission of Houghton, Mifflin & Co., the authorized publishers of their works.

C. H. S.

Contents

	Page
PREFACE	3
DIRECTIONS TO STUDENT	5
QUOTATIONS.	13
OUTLINE FOR THE STUDY OF FICTION	17
THE GREAT STONE FACE— <i>Hawthorne</i>	27
NOTE	25
STUDY OF THE STORY	67
NARRATIVE POETRY	77
THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER—	
<i>Coleridge</i>	79
STUDY OF THE POEM	109
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH SAMUEL TAYLOR COLE-	
RIDGE	113

Illustrations

	Page
Nathaniel Hawthorne	<i>Frontispiece</i> ✓
Old Man of the Mountains, in the White Mountains, N. H. Supposed to be what Hawthorne had in mind when he wrote <i>The Great Stone Face</i>	24 ✓
A Great Stone Face in the Dells of the St. Croix River	42 ✓
Echo Lake and Eagle Cliff in the White Mountains near Franconia Notch . . .	54 ✓
Bridal Veil Fall, Franconia Notch, White Mountains. These illustrations from the White Mountains are all taken very near the scene of <i>The Ambitious Guest</i> , printed in Part Two	60 ✓
Samuel Taylor Coleridge	76 ✓
Falcon Crag — Derwentwater. A scene in the English Lake Region near Southeys home	112 ✓

To the Student

You are expected to take up the study of the text as directed therein; to read, to consider, and to write as suggested in the discussion of the masterpieces. The papers which you write according to these directions are not to be sent in to the school, but are to be retained and occasionally reviewed by yourself. You will find many questions scattered through the volumes. These you are expected to answer to your own satisfaction, and it is not expected that the questions will prove very difficult. They are intended to turn your attention in the right direction, but are not intended to test your knowledge. The answers to these questions need not be written, and are not to be sent in to the school. If at any time the work is obscure, or you are in doubt as to what you should do, a letter to the school will receive a ready response.

The text-books do not constitute the entire correspondence course. Besides the books, the student will be furnished from time to time with the following:

To the Student

1. Test questions on each Part, the answers to which are to be sent to the school, where they are carefully read by trained instructors, and then returned to the students.
2. Estimates on his work, together with helpful criticisms and personal suggestions for continued study.
3. Correct printed answers to the test questions.
4. Other criticisms and suggestions as needed by the individual student.
5. When the course has been completed in a satisfactory manner, a diploma stating that fact is sent to the student.

INTERSTATE SCHOOL OF CORRESPONDENCE.

Part One

Fiction

Fiction

Now I take up a book I have read before, I know what to expect; the satisfaction is not lessened by being anticipated. I shake hands with and look our old, tried, and valued friend in the face — compare notes and chat the hour away.

— Hazlitt.

The man who does not love a story must be devoid of normal human sympathy with his kind.

— Bates.

Novels are the journal or record of manners; and the new importance of these books derives from the fact that the novelist begins to penetrate the surface and treat this part of life more worthily.

— Emerson.

As for the great Masters of the Art — Fielding, Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Victor Hugo — I, for one, feel irritated when the critics begin to appraise, compare, and to estimate them; there is nothing, I think, that we can give them but admiration that is unspeakable and gratitude that is silent. This silence proves more eloquently than any words how great, how beautiful an Art is Fiction.

— Walter Besant.

Outline for the Study of Fiction

Outline for the Study of Fiction

1. THE PERSONS. The center of interest for the reader is usually in one person or two about whom seem to cling most of the incidents in the story, and whose career the reader watches closely. Other persons appear from time to time and attract close attention, but eventually they drop into the background, and seem only to have contributed to the interest in the principal character. As one reads, these persons come before his eyes, and he makes their acquaintance. He notes their personal appearance, their carriage, their manners, and their traits of character. They are his friends or he knows them and scorns them as they deserve.

2. CHARACTER AND ITS DEVELOPMENT. One who reads a story should carefully consider the character and emotions of the persons who are introduced. The author may at once make the reader acquainted with them by *describing* in detail their traits of character or he may leave these to be inferred by the *conversation* of the individual. In the latter case, the reader is left to his own resources in interpretation, and he may mistake the purpose of the author and may fail to understand fully the course of the story because of his failure

Outline for the Study of Fiction

to appreciate the characters of the persons. Again, the author allows his reader to infer by the *action* of his persons what their characters are. This leaves still more to be done by the reader. He must now not only critically weigh the *action* of the persons, but must inquire into their motives and judge the probable causes which lead them to act as they do. It is not usual that an author confines himself entirely to the one method of displaying character, but he uses the three as best suits his pleasure or as the plot compels.

Frequently the story has as its distinctive purpose the development of character. The reader must then determine what was the original endowment of the person, what his traits and tendencies were. He must consider the various events of the story in their relation to this individual, must determine what effect each incident has had upon the person, and finally he must sum up in his own mind the various traits which go to make up the complete and final character as it appears at the close.

3. EMOTIONS INVOLVED. In reading a work of fiction there are two groups of emotions involved. First, those of the persons who appear in the story, and second, those which arise in the mind of the reader. Sometimes these are similar, as when the sympathy of the reader is so fully aroused that he takes upon himself the hopes and aspirations, the fears and trials, of the character

Outline for the Study of Fiction

he studies about. Again, the emotions in the reader may be distinctly opposed to those of the persons in the story. Love or affection in the character in the book may arouse in the reader a feeling of dislike or even of fear and hatred. In studying any story it is desirable to distinguish between these two groups, as the power and skill of the author usually depend upon the success he has in arousing the feelings of the reader through the emotions of the persons in his story.

4. THE PLOT. The author involves his character in a series of incidents more or less complicated, but all leading forward to a climax toward which the reader's interest and sympathies point. The course of these incidents can not be fully foreseen, and the author frequently exhibits much skill in concealing the final outcome, while he excites the curiosity of the reader. At the proper time, the intricate incidents simplify, and frequently in one startling event the whole plot stands revealed. This *denouement* is at or near the end of the story, and after it little remains to be done by the writer but to gather up the scattered threads of minor events. Sometimes a story is begun with a series of incidents not in the least related to one another, and the reader carries these separate in his mind until they finally blend together and he can look back and see the harmony of the plan. Many times there are subordinate series of incidents which in their outcome

Outline for the Study of Fiction

contribute to the general development of the major plot. The originality and skill of a writer can be determined most easily by studying his handling of the plot of his story. It is most interesting to analyze the different incidents, to place them in correct relation to one another, and to trace the main thread of incident which culminates in the climax. It is sometimes surprising to find that in what appears to be a very complicated story the plot itself is exceedingly simple. The writer has expanded it, added various chains of incidents, and skillfully withheld the climax so that the reader at no time realizes how little is involved in the plot.

5. THE SCENE. In a general sense this means the place where the story is located, although it must be understood more particularly as applying to the location of each incident. Many times the story lies wholly in one locality, to which no particular attention is given by the author, but at other times the scene changes and is described with great care and skill. In fact, the chief value of some stories lies in the happy bits of description by means of which the author makes us see where and how his persons live.

6. LOCAL COLORING. The peculiar traits of the persons, their manners and customs, and their modes of speech all should be in harmony with the time and place where the story is located. Those little mannerisms or tricks of speech, the

Outline for the Study of Fiction

dialect, or the peculiarities of costume that characterize the person, all give local coloring to the story. The author frequently harmonizes his style with the epoch of which he writes, and so gives a more brilliant atmosphere of reality.

7. THE PURPOSE. In many instances the main purpose of the story seems to be that of entertainment, but often fiction is used to teach a lesson, and in its garb are presented some of the great problems of life upon which the author passes his judgment. Often the story is meant to be a picture of a certain epoch or period in history, and is a serious study of the manner of living and of the habits of the people at that time, and then the story becomes a most vivid historical picture. The reader should always consider whether the story is one of serious import or whether its chief function is that of entertainment, for the manner of his reading will be governed largely by the decision he makes.

8. THE LESSON. It is not always that the author succeeds in accomplishing the purpose with which he sets out, and the lesson which the story really teaches may be quite different from that which it is the evident intent of the author to present. But often the highest inspiration is given and the most effective lessons are taught by the masterful pen of the story teller.

The Great Stone Face

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE



The Great Stone Face

THE preceding outline indicates a general course of study for any work of fiction, be it a short story or one of the most elaborate novels. By its aid we will discuss *The Great Stone Face*.

Read the story carefully from beginning to end, without any thought of the outline of study. Throw yourself into the spirit of the piece as much as you are able to do, remembering carefully the people and the incidents as they come before you. Get a general impression of the selection, a comprehensive idea of it in its entirety.

The Great Stone Face

ONE afternoon, when the sun was going down, a mother and her little boy sat at the door of their cottage, talking about the Great Stone Face. They had but to lift their eyes, and there it was plainly to be seen, though miles away, with the sunshine brightening all its features.

And what was the Great Stone Face?

Embosomed amongst a family of lofty mountains, there was a valley so spacious that it contained many thousand inhabitants. Some of these good people dwelt in log-huts, with the black forest all around them, on the steep and difficult hill-sides. Others had their homes in comfortable farm-houses, and cultivated the rich soil on the gentle slopes or level surfaces of the valley. Others, again, were congregated into populous villages, where some wild, highland rivulet, tumbling down from its birthplace in the upper mountain region, had been caught and tamed by human cunning, and compelled to turn the machinery of cotton-factories. The inhabitants of this

The Great Stone Face

valley, in short, were numerous, and of many modes of life. But all of them, grown people and children, had a kind of familiarity with the Great Stone Face, although some possessed the gift of distinguishing this grand natural phenomenon more perfectly than many of their neighbors.

The Great Stone Face, then, was a work of Nature in her mood of majestic playfulness, formed on the perpendicular side of a mountain by some immense rocks, which had been thrown together in such a position as, when viewed at a proper distance, precisely to resemble the features of a human countenance. It seemed as if an enormous giant, or a Titan,¹ had sculptured his own likeness on the precipice. There was the broad arch of the forehead, a hundred feet in height; the nose, with its long bridge; and the vast lips, which, if they could have spoken, would have rolled their thunder accents from one end of the valley to the other. True it is, that if the spectator approached too near, he lost the outline of the gigantic visage, and could discern only a heap of ponderous and gigantic rocks, piled in chaotic ruin one upon another. Retracing his steps, however,

¹. In Greek mythology, one of the giant children of Uranus (Heaven) and Gæa (Earth).

The Great Stone Face

the wondrous features would again be seen; and the farther he withdrew from them, the more like a human face, with all its original divinity intact, did they appear; until, as it grew dim in the distance, with the clouds and glorified vapor of the mountains clustering about it, the Great Stone Face seemed positively to be alive.

It was a happy lot for children to grow up to manhood or womanhood with the Great Stone Face before their eyes, for all the features were noble, and the expression was at once grand and sweet, as if it were the glow of a vast, warm heart, that embraced all mankind in its affections, and had room for more. It was an education only to look at it. According to the belief of many people, the valley owed much of its fertility to this benign aspect that was continually beaming over it, illuminating the clouds, and infusing its tenderness into the sunshine.

As we began with saying, a mother and her little boy sat at their cottage-door, gazing at the Great Stone Face, and talking about it. The child's name was Ernest.

"Mother," said he, while the Titanic visage smiled on him, "I wish that it could speak, for it looks so very kindly that its

The Great Stone Face

voice must needs be pleasant. If I were to see a man with such a face, I should love him dearly."

"If an old prophecy should come to pass," answered his mother, "we may see a man, some time or other, with exactly such a face as that."

"What prophecy do you mean, dear mother?" eagerly inquired Ernest. "Pray tell me all about it!"

So his mother told him a story that her own mother had told to her, when she herself was younger than little Ernest; a story, not of things that were past, but of what was yet to come; a story, nevertheless, so very old, that even the Indians, who formerly inhabited this valley, had heard it from their forefathers, to whom, as they affirmed, it had been murmured by the mountain streams, and whispered by the wind among the tree-tops. The purport was, that, at some future day, a child should be born hereabouts, who was destined to become the greatest and noblest personage of his time, and whose countenance, in manhood, should bear an exact resemblance to the Great Stone Face. Not a few old-fashioned people, and young ones likewise, in the ardor of their hopes, still cherished an endur-

The Great Stone Face

ing faith in this old prophecy. But others, who had seen more of the world, had watched and waited till they were weary, and had beheld no man with such a face, nor any man that proved to be much greater or nobler than his neighbors, concluded it to be nothing but an idle tale. At all events, the great man of the prophecy had not yet appeared.

"O mother, dear mother!" cried Ernest, clapping his hands above his head, "I do hope that I shall live to see him!"

His mother was an affectionate and thoughtful woman, and felt that it was wisest not to discourage the generous hopes of her little boy. So she only said to him, "perhaps you may."

And Ernest never forgot the story that his mother told him. It was always in his mind, whenever he looked upon the Great Stone Face. He spent his childhood in the log cottage where he was born, and was dutiful to his mother, and helpful to her in many things, assisting her much with his little hands, and more with his loving heart. In this manner, from a happy yet often pensive child, he grew up to be a mild, quiet, unobtrusive boy, and sun-browned with labor in the fields, but with more intelligence brightening his aspect than

The Great Stone Face

is seen in many lads who have been taught at famous schools. Yet Ernest had had no teacher, save only that the Great Stone Face became one to him. When the toil of the day was over, he would gaze at it for hours, until he began to imagine that those vast features recognized him, and gave him a smile of kindness and encouragement, responsive to his own look of veneration. We must not take upon us to affirm that this was a mistake, although the Face may have looked no more kindly at Ernest than at all the world besides. But the secret was that the boy's tender and confiding simplicity discerned what other people could not see; and thus the love, which was meant for all, became his peculiar portion.

About this time there went a rumor throughout the valley, that the great man, foretold from ages long ago, who was to bear a resemblance to the Great Stone Face, had appeared at last. It seems that, many years before, a young man had migrated from the valley and settled at a distant seaport, where, after getting together a little money, he had set up as a shopkeeper. His name—but I could never learn whether it was his real one, or a nickname that had grown out of his habits and success in life—was Gathergold. Being

The Great Stone Face

shrewd and active, and endowed by Providence with that instructable faculty which develops itself in what the world calls luck, he became an exceedingly rich merchant, and owner of a whole fleet of bulky-bottomed ships. All the countries of the globe appeared to join hands for the mere purpose of adding heap after heap to the mountainous accumulation of this one man's wealth. The cold regions of the north, almost within the gloom and shadow of the Arctic Circle, sent him their tribute in the shape of furs; hot Africa sifted for him the golden sands of her rivers, and gathered up the ivory tusks of her great elephants out of the forests; the East came bringing him the rich shawls, and spices, and teas, and the effulgence of diamonds, and the gleaming purity of large pearls. The ocean, not to be behindhand with the earth, yielded up her mighty whales, that Mr. Gathergold might sell their oil, and make a profit on it. Be the original commodity what it might, it was gold within his grasp. It might be said of him, as of Midas in the fable, that whatever he touched with his finger immediately glistened, and grew yellow, and was changed at once into sterling metal, or, which suited him still better, into piles of coin. And, when Mr.

The Great Stone Face

Gathergold had become so very rich that it would have taken him a hundred years only to count his wealth, he bethought himself of his native valley, and resolved to go back thither, and end his days where he was born. With this purpose in view, he sent a skillful architect to build him such a palace as should be fit for a man of his vast wealth to live in.

As I have said above, it had already been rumored in the valley that Mr. Gathergold had turned out to be the prophetic personage so long and vainly looked for, and that his visage was the perfect and undeniable similitude of the Great Stone Face. People were the more ready to believe that this must needs be the fact, when they beheld the splendid edifice that rose, as if by enchantment, on the site of his father's old weather-beaten farmhouse. The exterior was of marble, so dazzlingly white that it seemed as though the whole structure might melt away in the sunshine, like those humbler ones which Mr. Gathergold, in his young play-days, before his fingers were gifted with the touch of transmutation, had been accustomed to build of snow. It had a richly ornamented portico, supported by tall pillars, beneath which was a lofty door, studded with silver knobs, and made of a kind

The Great Stone Face

of variegated wood that had been brought from beyond the sea. The windows, from the floor to the ceiling of each stately apartment, were composed, respectively, of but one enormous pane of glass, so transparently pure that it was said to be a finer medium than even the vacant atmosphere. Hardly anybody had been permitted to see the interior of this palace; but it was reported, and with good semblance of truth, to be far more gorgeous than the outside, insomuch that whatever was iron or brass in other houses was silver or gold in this; and Mr. Gathergold's bedchamber, especially, made such a glittering appearance that no ordinary man would have been able to close his eyes there. But, on the other hand, Mr. Gathergold was now so inured to wealth, that perhaps he could not have closed his eyes unless where the gleam of it was certain to find its way beneath his eyelids.

In due time, the mansion was finished; next came the upholsterers, with magnificent furniture; then, a whole troop of black and white servants, the harbingers of Mr. Gathergold, who, in his own majestic person, was expected to arrive at sunset. Our friend Ernest, meanwhile, had been deeply stirred by the idea that the great man, the noble man, the

The Great Stone Face

man of prophecy, after so many ages of delay, was at length to be made manifest to his native valley. He knew, boy as he was, that there were a thousand ways in which Mr. Gathergold, with his vast wealth, might transform himself into an angel of beneficence, and assume a control over human affairs as wide and benignant as the smile of the Great Stone Face. Full of faith and hope, Ernest doubted not that what the people said was true, and that now he was to behold the living likeness of those wondrous features on the mountain-side. While the boy was still gazing up the valley, and fancying, as he always did, that the Great Stone Face returned his gaze and looked kindly at him, the rumbling of wheels was heard, approaching swiftly along the winding road.

“Here he comes!” cried a group of people who were assembled to witness the arrival.
“Here comes the great Mr. Gathergold!”

A carriage, drawn by four horses, dashed round the turn of the road. Within it, thrust partly out of the window, appeared the physiognomy of the old man, with a skin as yellow as if his own Midas-hand had transmuted it. He had a low forehead, small, sharp eyes, puckered about with innumerable wrinkles,

The Great Stone Face

and very thin lips, which he made still thinner by pressing them forcibly together.

“The very image of the Great Stone Face!” shouted the people. “Sure enough, the old prophecy is true; and here we have the great man come, at last!”

And, what greatly perplexed Ernest, they seemed actually to believe that here was the likeness which they spoke of. By the roadside there chanced to be an old beggar-woman and two little beggar-children, stragglers from some far-off region, who, as the carriage rolled onward, held out their hands and lifted up their doleful voices, most piteously beseeching charity. A yellow claw — the very same that had clawed together so much wealth — poked itself out of the coach window, and dropt some copper coins upon the ground; so that, though the great man’s name seems to have been Gathergold, he might just as suitably have been nicknamed Scattercopper. Still, nevertheless, with an earnest shout, and evidently with as much good faith as ever, the people bellowed,—

“He is the very image of the Great Stone Face!”

But Ernest turned sadly from the wrinkled shrewdness of that sordid visage, and gazed

The Great Stone Face

up the valley, where, amid a gathering mist, gilded by the last sunbeams, he could still distinguish those glorious features which had impressed themselves into his soul. Their aspect cheered him. What did the benign lips seem to say?

"He will come! Fear not, Ernest; the man will come!"

The years went on, and Ernest ceased to be a boy. He had grown to be a young man now. He attracted little notice from the other inhabitants of the valley; for they saw nothing remarkable in his way of life, save that, when the labor of the day was over, he still loved to go apart and gaze and meditate upon the Great Stone Face. According to their idea of the matter, it was a folly, indeed, but pardonable, inasmuch as Ernest was industrious, kind, and neighborly, and neglected no duty for the sake of indulging this idle habit. They knew not that the Great Stone Face had become a teacher to him, and that the sentiment which was expressed in it would enlarge the young man's heart, and fill it with wider and deeper sympathies than other hearts. They knew not that thence would come a better wisdom than could be learned from books, and a better life than could be moulded on the

The Great Stone Face

defaced example of other human lives. Neither did Ernest know that the thoughts and affections which came to him so naturally, in the fields and at the fireside, and wherever he communed with himself, were of a higher tone than those which all men shared with him. A simple soul,—simple as when his mother first taught him the old prophecy,—he beheld the marvelous features beaming adown the valley, and still wondered that their human counterpart was so long in making his appearance.

By this time poor Mr. Gathergold was dead and buried; and the oddest part of the matter was, that his wealth, which was the body and spirit of his existence, had disappeared before his death, leaving nothing of him but a living skeleton, covered over with a wrinkled, yellow skin. Since the melting away of his gold, it had been very generally conceded that there was no such striking resemblance, after all, betwixt the ignoble features of the ruined merchant and that majestic face upon the mountain-side. So the people ceased to honor him during his lifetime, and quietly consigned him to forgetfulness after his decease. Once in a while, it is true, his memory was brought up in connection with the magnificent palace

The Great Stone Face

which he had built, and which had long ago been turned into a hotel for the accommodation of strangers, multitudes of whom came, every summer, to visit that famous natural curiosity, the Great Stone Face. Thus, Mr. Gathergold being discredited and thrown into the shade, the man of prophecy was yet to come.

It so happened that a native-born son of the valley, many years before, had enlisted as a soldier, and, after a great deal of hard fighting, had now become an illustrious commander. Whatever he may be called in history, he was known in camps and on the battle-field under the nickname of old Blood-and-Thunder. This war-worn veteran, being now infirm with age and wounds, and weary of the turmoil of a military life, and of the roll of the drum and the clangor of the trumpet, that had so long been ringing in his ears, had lately signified a purpose of returning to his native valley, hoping to find repose where he remembered to have left it. The inhabitants, his old neighbors and their grown-up children, were resolved to welcome the renowned warrior with a salute of cannon and public dinner; and all the more enthusiastically, it being affirmed that now, at last, the likeness of the

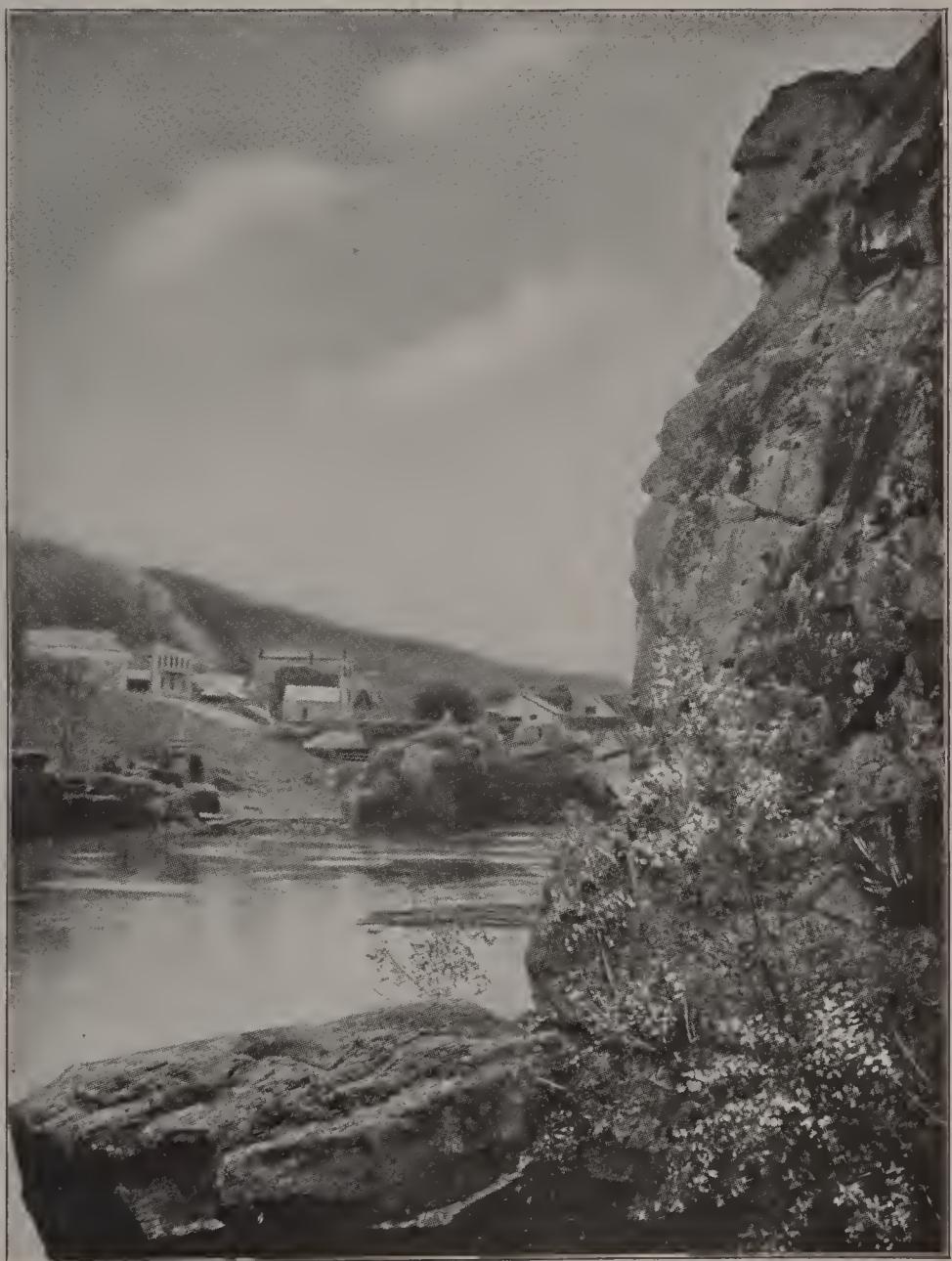
The Great Stone Face

Great Stone Face had actually appeared. An aid-de-camp of Old Blood-and-Thunder, traveling through the valley, was said to have been struck with the resemblance. Moreover the schoolmates and early acquaintances of the general were ready to testify, on oath, that, to the best of their recollection, the aforesaid general had been exceedingly like the majestic image, even when a boy, only that the idea had never occurred to them at that period. Great, therefore, was the excitement throughout the valley; and many people, who had never once thought of glancing at the Great Stone Face for years before, now spent their time in gazing at it, for the sake of knowing exactly how General Blood-and-Thunder looked.

On the day of the great festival, Ernest, with all the other people of the valley, left his work, and proceeded to the spot where the sylvan banquet was prepared. As he approached, the loud voice of the Rev. Dr. Battleblast was heard, beseeching a blessing on the good things set before them, and on the distinguished friend of peace in whose honor they were assembled. The tables were arranged in a cleared space of the woods, shut in by the surrounding trees, except where a

The Great Stone Face

vista opened eastward, and afforded a distant view of the Great Stone Face. Over the general's chair, which was a relic from the home of Washington, there was an arch of verdant boughs, with the laurel profusely intermixed, and surmounted by his country's banner, beneath which he had won his victories. Our friend Ernest raised himself on his tiptoes, in hopes to get a glimpse of the celebrated guest; but there was a mighty crowd about the tables anxious to hear the toasts and speeches, and to catch any word that might fall from the general in reply; and a volunteer company, doing duty as a guard, pricked ruthlessly with their bayonets at any particularly quiet person among the throng. So Ernest, being of an unobtrusive character, was thrust quite into the background, where he could see no more of Old Blood-and-Thunder's physiognomy than if it had been still blazing on the battle-field. To console himself, he turned toward the Great Stone Face, which, like a faithful and long-remembered friend, looked back and smiled upon him through the vista of the forest. Meantime, however, he could overhear the remarks of various individuals, who were comparing the features of the hero with the face on the distant mountain-side.



The Great Stone Face

"'Tis the same face, to a hair!" cried one man, cutting a caper for joy.

"Wonderfully like, that's a fact!" responded another.

"Like! why, I call it Old Blood-and-Thunder himself, in a monstrous looking-glass!" cried a third. "And why not? He's the greatest man of this or any other age, beyond a doubt."

And then all three of the speakers gave a great shout, which communicated electricity to the crowd, and called forth a roar from a thousand voices, that went reverberating for miles among the mountains, until you might have supposed that the Great Stone Face had poured its thunder-breath into the cry. All these comments, and this vast enthusiasm, served the more to interest our friend; nor did he think of questioning that now, at length, the mountain-visage had found its human counterpart. It is true, Ernest had imagined that this long-looked-for personage would appear in the character of a man of peace, uttering wisdom, and doing good, and making people happy. But, taking an habitual breadth of view, with all his simplicity, he contended that Providence should choose its own method of blessing mankind, and could

The Great Stone Face

conceive that this great end might be effected even by a warrior and a bloody sword, should inscrutable wisdom see fit to order matters so.

“The general! the general!” was now the cry. “Hush! silence! Old Blood-and-Thunder’s going to make a speech.”

Even so; for the cloth being removed, the general’s health had been drunk, amid shouts of applause, and he now stood upon his feet to thank the company. Ernest saw him. There he was, over the shoulders of the crowd, from the two glittering epaulets and embroidered collar upward, beneath the arch of green boughs with intertwined laurel, and the banner drooping as if to shade his brow! And there, too, visible in the same glance, through the vista of the forest, appeared the Great Stone Face! And was there, indeed, such a resemblance as the crowd had testified? Alas, Ernest could not recognize it! He beheld a war-worn and weather-beaten countenance, full of energy, and expressive of an iron will; but the gentle wisdom, the deep, broad, tender sympathies, were altogether wanting in Old Blood-and-Thunder’s visage; and even if the Great Stone Face had assumed his look of stern command, the milder traits would still have tempered it.

The Great Stone Face

"This is not the man of prophecy," sighed Ernest to himself, as he made his way out of the throng. "And must the world wait longer yet?"

The mists had congregated about the distant mountain-side, and there were seen the grand and awful features of the Great Stone Face, awful but benignant, as if a mighty angel were sitting among the hills, and enrobing himself in a cloud-vesture of gold and purple. As he looked, Ernest could hardly believe but that a smile beamed over the whole visage, with a radiance still brightening, although without motion of the lips. It was probably the effect of the western sunshine, melting through the thinly diffused vapors that had swept between him and the object that he gazed at. But—as it always did—the aspect of his marvelous friend made Ernest as hopeful as if he had never hoped in vain.

"Fear not, Ernest," said his heart, even as if the Great Face were whispering him,— "fear not, Ernest; he will come."

More years sped swiftly and tranquilly away. Ernest still dwelt in his native valley, and was now a man of middle age. By imperceptible degrees, he had become known among the people. Now, as heretofore, he

The Great Stone Face

labored for his bread, and was the same simple-hearted man that he had always been. But he had thought and felt so much, he had given so many of the best hours of his life to unworldly hopes for some great good to mankind, that it seemed as though he had been talking with the angels, and had imbibed a portion of their wisdom unawares. It was visible in the calm and well-considered beneficence of his daily life, the quiet stream of which had made a wide, green margin all along its course. Not a day passed by, that the world was not the better because this man, humble as he was, had lived. He never stepped aside from his own path, yet would always reach a blessing to his neighbor. Almost involuntarily, too, he had become a preacher. The pure and high simplicity of his thought, which, as one of its manifestations, took shape in the good deeds that dropped silently from his hand, flowed also forth in speech. He uttered truths that wrought upon and moulded the lives of those who heard him. His auditors, it may be, never suspected that Ernest, their own neighbor and familiar friend, was more than an ordinary man; least of all did Ernest himself suspect it; but, inevitably as the murmur of a rivulet, came thoughts out

The Great Stone Face

of his mouth that no other human lips had spoken.

When the people's minds had had a little time to cool, they were ready enough to acknowledge their mistake in imagining a similarity between General Blood-and-Thunder's truculent physiognomy and the benign visage on the mountain-side. But now, again, there were reports and many paragraphs in the newspapers, affirming that the likeness of the Great Stone Face had appeared upon the broad shoulders of a certain eminent statesman. He, like Mr. Gathergold and Old Blood-and-Thunder, was a native of the valley, but had left it in his early days, and taken up the trades of law and politics. Instead of the rich man's wealth and the warrior's sword, he had but a tongue, and it was mightier than both together. So wonderfully eloquent was he, that whatever he might choose to say, his auditors had no choice but to believe him; wrong looked like right, and right like wrong; for when it pleased him, he could make a kind of illuminated fog with his mere breath, and obscure the natural daylight with it. His tongue, indeed, was a magic instrument: sometimes it rumbled like the thunder; sometimes it warbled like the sweetest music. It was

The Great Stone Face

the blast of war, — the song of peace; and it seemed to have a heart in it, when there was no such matter. In good truth, he was a wondrous man; and when his tongue had acquired him all other imaginable success, — when it had been heard in halls of state, and in the courts of princes and potentates, — after it had made him known all over the world, even as a voice crying from shore to shore, — it finally persuaded his countrymen to select him for the Presidency. Before this time, — indeed, as soon as he began to grow celebrated, — his admirers had found out the resemblance between him and the Great Stone Face; and so much were they struck by it, that throughout the country this distinguished gentleman was known by the name of Old Stony Phiz. The phrase was considered as giving a highly favorable aspect to his political prospects; for, as is likewise the case with the Popedom, nobody ever becomes President without taking a name other than his own.

While his friends were doing their best to make him President, Old Stony Phiz, as he was called, set out on a visit to the valley where he was born. Of course, he had no other object than to shake hands with his fellow-citizens, and neither thought nor cared

The Great Stone Face

about any effect which his progress through the country might have upon the election. Magnificent preparations were made to receive the illustrious statesman; a cavalcade of horsemen set forth to meet him at the boundary line of the State, and all the people left their business and gathered along the wayside to see him pass. Among these was Ernest. Though more than once disappointed, as we have seen, he had such a hopeful and confiding nature, that he was always ready to believe in whatever seemed beautiful and good. He kept his heart continually open, and thus was sure to catch the blessing from on high when it should come. So now again, as buoyantly as ever, he went forth to behold the likeness of the Great Stone Face.

The cavalcade came prancing along the road, with a great clattering of hoofs and a mighty cloud of dust, which rose up so dense and high that the visage of the mountain-side was completely hidden from Ernest's eyes. All the great men of the neighborhood were there on horseback; militia officers, in uniform; the member of Congress; the sheriff of the county; the editors of newspapers; and many a farmer, too, had mounted his patient steed, with his Sunday coat upon his back. It really

The Great Stone Face

was a very brilliant spectacle, especially as there were numerous banners flaunting over the cavalcade, on some of which were gorgeous portraits of the illustrious statesman and the Great Stone Face, smiling familiarly at one another, like two brothers. If the pictures were to be trusted, the mutual resemblance, it must be confessed, was marvelous. We must not forget to mention that there was a band of music, which made the echoes of the mountains ring and reverberate with the loud triumph of its strains; so that airy and soul-thrilling melodies broke out among all the heights and hollows, as if every nook of his native valley had found a voice, to welcome the distinguished guest. But the grandest effect was when the far-off mountain precipice flung back the music; for then the Great Stone Face itself seemed to be swelling the triumphant chorus, in acknowledgment that, at length, the man of prophecy was come.

All this while the people were throwing up their hats and shouting, with enthusiasm so contagious that the heart of Ernest kindled up, and he likewise threw up his hat, and shouted, as loudly as the loudest, "Huzza for the great man ! Huzza for Old Stony Phiz !" But as yet he had not seen him.

The Great Stone Face

"Here he is, now!" cried those who stood near Ernest. "There! There! Look at Old Stony Phiz and then at the Old Man of the Mountain, and see if they are not as like as two twin brothers!"

In the midst of all this gallant array came an open barouche, drawn by four white horses; and in the barouche, with his massive head uncovered, sat the illustrious statesman, Old Stony Phiz himself.

"Confess it," said one of Ernest's neighbors to him, "the Great Stone Face has met its match at last!"

Now, it must be owned that, at his first glimpse of the countenance which was bowing and smiling from the barouche, Ernest did fancy that there was a resemblance between it and the old familiar face upon the mountain-side. The brow, with its massive depth and loftiness, and all the other features, indeed, were boldly and strongly hewn, as if in emulation of a more than heroic, of a Titanic, model. But the sublimity and stateliness, the grand expression of a divine sympathy, that illuminated the mountain visage and etherealized its ponderous granite substance into spirit, might here be sought in vain. Something had been originally left out, or had departed. And

The Great Stone Face

therefore the marvelously gifted statesman had always a weary gloom in the deep caverns of his eyes, as of a child that has outgrown its playthings, or a man of mighty faculties and little aims, whose life, with all its high performances, was vague and empty, because no high purpose had endowed it with reality.

Still, Ernest's neighbor was thrusting his elbow into his side, and pressing him for an answer.

"Confess! confess! Is not he the very picture of your Old Man of the Mountain?"

"No!" said Ernest, bluntly, "I see little or no likeness."

"Then so much the worse for the Great Stone Face!" answered his neighbor; and again he set up a shout for Old Stony Phiz.

But Ernest turned away, melancholy, and almost despondent: for this was the saddest of his disappointments, to behold a man who might have fulfilled the prophecy, and had not willed to do so. Meantime, the cavalcade, the banners, the music, and the barouches swept past him, with the vociferous crowd in the rear, leaving the dust to settle down, and the Great Stone Face to be revealed again,

The Great Stone Face

with the grandeur that it had worn for untold centuries.

"Lo, here I am, Ernest!" the benign lips seemed to say. "I have waited longer than thou, and am not yet weary. Fear not; the man will come."

The years hurried onward, treading in their haste on one another's heels. And now they began to bring white hairs, and scatter them over the head of Ernest; they made reverend wrinkles across his forehead, and furrows in his cheeks. He was an aged man. But not in vain had he grown old: more than the white hairs on his head were the sage thoughts in his mind; his wrinkles and furrows were inscriptions that Time had graved, and in which he had written legends of wisdom that had been tested by the tenor of a life. And Ernest had ceased to be obscure. Unsought for, undesired, had come the fame which so many seek, and made him known in the great world, beyond the limits of the valley in which he had dwelt so quietly. College professors, and even the active men of cities, came from far to see and converse with Ernest; for the report had gone abroad that this simple husbandman had ideas unlike those of other men, not gained from books, but of a higher tone,—

The Great Stone Face

a tranquil and familiar majesty, as if he had been talking with the angels as his daily friends. Whether it were sage, statesman, or philanthropist, Ernest received these visitors with the gentle sincerity that had characterized him from boyhood, and spoke freely with them of whatever came uppermost, or lay deepest in his heart or their own. While they talked together, his face would kindle, unawares, and shine upon them, as with a mild evening light. Pensive with the fullness of such discourse, his guests took leave and went their way; and passing up the valley, paused to look at the Great Stone Face, imagining that they had seen its likeness in a human countenance, but could not remember where.

While Ernest had been growing up and growing old, a bountiful Providence had granted a new poet to this earth. He, likewise, was a native of the valley, but had spent the greater part of his life at a distance from that romantic region, pouring out his sweet music amid the bustle and din of cities. Often, however, did the mountains which had been familiar to him in his childhood lift their snowy peaks into the clear atmosphere of his poetry. Neither was the Great Stone Face



The Great Stone Face

forgotten, for the poet had celebrated it in an ode, which was grand enough to have been uttered by its own majestic lips. This man of genius, we may say, had come down from heaven with wonderful endowments. If he sang of a mountain, the eyes of all mankind beheld a mightier grandeur reposing on its breast, or soaring to its summit, than had before been seen there. If his theme were a lovely lake, a celestial smile had now been thrown over it, to gleam forever on its surface. If it were the vast old sea, even the deep immensity of its dread bosom seemed to swell the higher, as if moved by the emotions of the song. Thus the world assumed another and a better aspect from the hour that the poet blessed it with his happy eyes. The Creator had bestowed him, as the last best touch to his own handiwork. Creation was not finished till the poet came to interpret, and so complete it.

The effect was no less high and beautiful, when his human brethren were the subject of his verse. The man or woman, sordid with the common dust of life, who crossed his daily path, and the little child who played in it, were glorified if he beheld them in his mood of poetic faith. He showed the golden links

The Great Stone Face

of the great chain that intertwined them with an angelic kindred; he brought out the hidden traits of a celestial birth that made them worthy of such kin. Some, indeed, there were, who thought to show the soundness of their judgment by affirming that all the beauty and dignity of the natural world existed only in the poet's fancy. Let such men speak for themselves, who undoubtedly appear to have been spawned forth by Nature with a contemptuous bitterness; she having plastered them up out of her refuse stuff, after all the swine were made. As respects all things else, the poet's ideal was the truest truth.

The songs of this poet found their way to Ernest. He read them after his customary toil, seated on the bench before his cottage-door, where for such a length of time he had filled his repose with thought, by gazing at the Great Stone Face. And now as he read stanzas that caused the soul to thrill within him, he lifted his eyes to the vast countenance beaming on him so benignantly.

"O majestic friend," he murmured, addressing the Great Stone Face, "is not this man worthy to resemble thee?"

The Face seemed to smile, but answered not a word.

The Great Stone Face

Now it happened that the poet, though he dwelt so far away, had not only heard of Ernest, but had meditated much upon his character, until he deemed nothing so desirable as to meet this man, whose untaught wisdom walked hand in hand with the noble simplicity of his life. One summer morning, therefore, he took passage by the railroad, and, in the decline of the afternoon, alighted from the cars at no great distance from Ernest's cottage. The great hotel, which had formerly been the palace of Mr. Gathergold, was close at hand, but the poet, with his carpet bag on his arm, inquired at once where Ernest dwelt, and was resolved to be accepted as his guest.

Approaching the door, he there found the good old man, holding a volume in his hand, which alternately he read, and then, with a finger between the leaves, looked lovingly at the Great Stone Face.

"Good evening," said the poet. "Can you give a traveler a night's lodging?"

"Willingly," answered Ernest; and then he added, smiling, "Methinks I never saw the Great Stone Face look so hospitably at a stranger."

The poet sat down on the bench beside

The Great Stone Face

him, and he and Ernest talked together. Often had the poet held intercourse with the wittiest and the wisest, but never before with a man like Ernest, whose thoughts and feelings gushed up with such a natural freedom, and who made great truths so familiar by his simple utterance of them. Angels, as had been so often said, seemed to have wrought with him at his labor in the fields; angels seemed to have sat with him by the fireside; and, dwelling with angels as friend with friends, he had imbibed the sublimity of their ideas, and imbued it with the sweet and lowly charm of household words. So thought the poet. And Ernest, on the other hand, was moved and agitated by the living images which the poet flung out of his mind, and which peopled all the air about the cottage-door with shapes of beauty, both gay and pensive. The sympathies of these two men instructed them with a profounder sense than either could have attained alone. Their minds accorded into one strain, and made delightful music which neither of them could have claimed as all his own, nor distinguished his own share from the other's. They led one another, as it were, into a high pavilion of their thoughts, so remote, and hitherto so

The Great Stone Face

dim, that they had never entered it before, and so beautiful that they desired to be there always.

As Ernest listened to the poet, he imagined that the Great Stone Face was bending forward to listen, too. He gazed earnestly into the poet's glowing eyes.

"Who are you, my strangely gifted guest?" he said.

The poet laid his finger on the volume that Ernest had been reading.

"You have read these poems," said he. "You know me, then, — for I wrote them."

Again, and still more earnestly than before, Ernest examined the poet's features; then turned towards the Great Stone Face; then back, with an uncertain aspect, to his guest. But his countenance fell; he shook his head, and sighed.

"Wherefore are you sad?" inquired the poet.

"Because," replied Ernest, "all through life I have awaited the fulfillment of a prophecy; and, when I read these poems, I hoped that it might be fulfilled in you."

"You hoped," answered the poet, faintly smiling, "to find in me the likeness of the Great Stone Face. And you are disappointed,

The Great Stone Face

as formerly with Mr. Gathergold, and Old Blood-and-Thunder, and Old Stony Phiz. Yes, Ernest, it is my doom. You must add my name to the illustrious three, and record another failure of your hopes. For—in shame and sadness do I speak it, Ernest—I am not worthy to be typified by yonder benign and majestic image."

"And why?" asked Ernest. He pointed to the volume. "Are not those thoughts divine?"

"They have a strain of the Divinity," replied the poet. "You can hear in them the far-off echo of a heavenly song. But my life, dear Ernest, has not corresponded with my thought. I have had grand dreams, but they have been only dreams, because I have lived—and that, too, by my own choice—among poor and mean realities. Sometimes even—shall I dare to say it?—I lack faith in the grandeur, the beauty, and the goodness, which my own works are said to have made more evident in nature and in human life. Why, then, pure seeker of the good and true, shouldst thou hope to find me, in yonder image of the divine?"

The poet spoke sadly, and his eyes were dim with tears. So, likewise, were those of Ernest.

At the hour of sunset, as had long been his



The Great Stone Face

frequent custom, Ernest was to discourse to an assemblage of the neighboring inhabitants in the open air. He and the poet, arm in arm, still talking together as they went along, proceeded to the spot. It was a small nook among the hills, with a gray precipice behind, the stern front of which was relieved by the pleasant foliage of many creeping plants that made a tapestry for the naked rock, by hanging their festoons from all its rugged angles. At a small elevation above the ground, set in a rich framework of verdure, there appeared a niche, spacious enough to admit a human figure, with freedom for such gestures as spontaneously accompany earnest thought and genuine emotion. Into this natural pulpit Ernest ascended, and threw a look of familiar kindness around upon his audience. They stood, or sat, or reclined upon the grass, as seemed good to each, with the departing sunshine falling obliquely over them, and mingling its subdued cheerfulness with the solemnity of a grove of ancient trees, beneath and amid the boughs of which the golden rays were constrained to pass. In another direction was seen the Great Stone Face, with the same cheer, combined with the same solemnity, in its benignant aspect.

Ernest began to speak, giving to the people

The Great Stone Face

of what was in his heart and mind. His words had power, because they accorded with his thoughts; and his thoughts had reality and depth, because they harmonized with the life which he had always lived. It was not mere breath that this preacher uttered; they were the words of life, because a life of good deeds and holy love was melted into them. Pearls, pure and rich, had been dissolved into this precious draught. The poet, as he listened, felt that the being and character of Ernest were a nobler strain of poetry than he had ever written. His eyes glistening with tears, he gazed reverentially at the venerable man, and said within himself that never was there an aspect so worthy of a prophet and a sage as that mild, sweet, thoughtful countenance, with the glory of white hair diffused about it. At a distance, but distinctly to be seen, high up in the golden light of the setting sun, appeared the Great Stone Face, with hoary mists around it, like the white hairs around the brow of Ernest. Its look of grand beneficence seemed to embrace the world.

At that moment, in sympathy with a thought which he was about to utter, the face of Ernest assumed a grandeur of expression, so imbued with benevolence, that the poet, by an irresist-

The Great Stone Face

ible impulse, threw his arms aloft, and shouted,—

“Behold! Behold! Ernest is himself the likeness of the Great Stone Face!”

Then all the people looked, and saw that what the deep-sighted poet said was true. The prophecy was fulfilled. But Ernest, having finished what he had to say, took the poet’s arm, and walked slowly homeward, still hoping that some wiser and better man than himself would by and by appear, bearing a resemblance to the GREAT STONE FACE.

Study of The Great Stone Face

Study of The Great Stone Face

Now read the story through again and again, each time with the idea of verifying or improving the statements in one or more of the topics in the following study. In these latter readings learn to skip quickly all those parts that do not refer to the point you have in mind. Train your eye to see at a glance what a paragraph relates to, whether it be to a person or to the development of the plot. The first time, you perused the story carefully word by word for a general impression — now you read to find what is said here and there on a particular subject. The attitude of your mind has changed. At first it was merely receptive, now it inquires and weighs.

i. THE PERSONS. The chief person is Ernest himself. He appears in the story at first as a little boy sitting with his mother at the door of his cottage, and deeply interested in the Great Stone Face, which, though it remains immovable at the end of the valley, is in itself almost a living person. Ernest grows up under our eyes, changing from the pensive child to the quiet, unobtrusive boy, having no other teacher than the Great Stone Face. Later we see him as a young man, as a middle-aged man, and as an old man hopefully waiting, though often despondent in his anticipa-

Study of The Great Stone Face

tion of the fulfillment of the prophecy. He is a middle-aged man when fame comes to him, and though he labors for his bread and remains the same simple-hearted man, yet to others it seems as though he has been talking with the angels and has imbibed a portion of their wisdom unawares. In the last scene of the story, he is a venerable man with a glory of white hair diffused about his sweet, thoughtful countenance, which bears an aspect worthy of a prophet and a sage.

As secondary characters, we see introduced one after the other, Gathergold, Old Blood-and-Thunder, Old Stony Phiz, and The Poet. The first is a "shrewd and active man who was endowed by Providence with that inscrutable faculty which develops itself in what the world calls luck." The whole world has yielded him its tribute until it may be said of him, as of Midas in the fable, that whatever he touches with his finger immediately glistens and turns into piles of coin. Hawthorne pictures him "with a skin as yellow as if his own Midas hand had transmuted it. He had a low forehead, small, sharp eyes, puckered about with innumerable wrinkles, and very thin lips which he made still thinner by pressing them forcibly together." His hand is like a yellow claw.

Old Blood-and-Thunder is infirm with age and wounds, weary of the turmoil of military life. Still he is tall and stately, and when he stands up at the

Study of The Great Stone Face

banquet he is seen over the shoulders of the crowd, and his face assumes a look of strong command, not tempered by any milder traits.

Old Stony Phiz is neither rich nor warlike, but he is an orator, mightier than the miser and the warrior. His tongue is like a magic instrument. Sometimes it rumbles like the thunder, and "sometimes it warbles like the sweetest music." In the barouche he sits with his head uncovered; "the brow with its massive depth and loftiness, and all the other features, indeed, were boldly and strongly hewn, as if in emulation of a more than heroic, of a Titanic, model." But something has been left out originally, or has departed so that there is a weary gloom in the deep caverns of his eyes as of a child that has outgrown its playthings.

Of the Poet's personal appearance Hawthorne says little, but he lauds his skill as a versifier so highly that we are inclined to believe the Poet a most attractive man.

2. CHARACTER AND ITS DEVELOPMENT. This story is one that deals particularly with the development of a character. The boy, simple, gentle, and refined, was thrown under the influence of, and in almost daily contact with, one of the sublimest phenomena in nature. By conversation with his mother he learned to love and be in sympathy with this almost human face, and his hopes and aspirations all centered in the realization of the prophecy. He met Gathergold, the personifi-

Study of The Great Stone Face

cation of wealth, and at first was hopeful because of the possibilities that he thought lay before one who had such means. Ultimately he saw the hollowness of the miser's pretensions, and grew the better for this acquaintance with the world. When Old Blood-and-Thunder came, Ernest hoped that in spite of the bloody career the man had had, there might be in him the power for good that so high an ideal must possess. But he was not carried away by the plaudits of the people; he clung more closely to his conception, and his character came from this test stronger even than before. Though there was much for him to admire in the character of Old Stony Phiz, yet the fame that came through his marvelous oratory was as nothing to Ernest when he found that heart-power, and love for mankind were lacking. By constantly cherishing his high ideal, and by the long periods of reflection in which he seemed to commune with the spirit of the Great Stone Face, his ideas, not gained from books, were raised to a higher tone and acquired a tranquil and familiar majesty as if he had made the angels his daily friends. It is in the Poet that Ernest found a man most nearly to his satisfaction. His sympathies were strongly enlisted, and had it not been for the confession of the Poet himself, Ernest might have hailed him as the realization of his prophecy, but when the Poet explained his own character, Ernest recognized the weakness, and gave up regretfully

Study of The Great Stone Face

the hope he had cherished. By these experiences Ernest himself grew steadily like the ideal he had so long held, and when at the last he stood in his rock-bound pulpit, the influences of nature had made him fully the personification of what was typified in the Great Stone Face. But his modesty prevented him from feeling this, and he remained simple, quiet, and kindly, hoping that some man wiser and better than himself would by and by appear.

Hawthorne describes the character of each person he introduces, and leaves very little to be learned through their conversation and their acts. They conduct themselves in harmony with his descriptions, but they speak and act solely for the purpose of throwing light upon the character of Ernest.

3. EMOTIONS INVOLVED. In Gathergold are avarice and thirst for wealth, Old Blood-and-Thunder is ambitious and hungry for power, Old Stony Phiz is selfish and disappointed, the Poet is a dreamer and false to his high ideals, yet these traits do not impress the reader except as they affect Ernest in his veneration for truth, and his love of mankind. When the reading is finished one finds himself convinced of the sincerity of Ernest, and mastered by admiration for the man who followed his ideals so closely, and realized them so completely.

4. THE PLOT. Among Hawthorne's notes is

Study of The Great Stone Face

the following paragraph, written long before the story was completed, which contains the plot in as simple a form as we can give it:—

“The semblance of a human face to be formed on the side of a mountain, or in the fracture of a small stone, by a *lusus naturæ* (freak of nature). The face is an object of curiosity for years or centuries, and by and by a boy is born whose features gradually assume the aspect of that portrait. At some critical juncture the resemblance is found to be perfect. A prophecy may be connected.”

Hawthorne carried out his plan almost to the letter, though he has made the face more than an object of curiosity, and has put into the plot the one thought that the boy's features gradually assumed the aspect of the face because of his love for nature and because he followed closely his high ideals.

5. THE SCENE. The scene of this entire story is in a spacious valley surrounded by lofty mountains. Some of the people were poor and dwelt in log huts. Others had comfortable farm houses, and others again were gathered into populous villages. At the head of this valley was the wonderful Great Stone Face, resembling the likeness of a Titan on the face of the precipice. When the spectator was near at hand he lost some of the outline of this gigantic visage, but further away it seemed altogether like a human face, and as it

Study of The Great Stone Face

grew dim in the remote distance, with the clouds and glorified vapor of the mountains clustering about it, it seemed actually alive.

But each important event in the story has its own stage setting. Mr. Gathergold is introduced in his marvelous marble palace so dazzlingly white that it seemed as though the whole structure might melt away in sunshine. Hawthorne has described this in detail, and makes it all contribute to our appreciation of the fact that Gathergold's whole soul was in his riches; he could not close his eyes except where the gleam of gold was certain to find its way beneath his eyelids. It is at a banquet where the tables are arranged in a cleared space of the woods, shut in by surrounding trees with a vista opening eastward toward the Great Stone Face, that Blood-and-Thunder is introduced to Ernest. Old Stony Phiz comes to him in a great cavalcade prancing along the road with the noisy clattering of hoofs and a mighty cloud of dust. Hawthorne makes much of the brilliant spectacle and describes the people, the banners, the pictures, and the triumphant music that echoed in airy and soul-thrilling melodies from the heights and hollows of the mountains. But he is particular to tell us that the dust from this cavalcade hid completely from Ernest's eyes the visage on the mountainside.

To Ernest's own humble home the Poet comes, and takes his place at the hearthstone. Haw-

Study of The Great Stone Face

thorne says little or nothing of the surroundings, and the attention of the reader is centered in the two men and their conversation.

6. LOCAL COLORING. There are no striking effects in this story. It is simple, commonplace, and might have been located with equal propriety in a valley in any of the Eastern States. There is nothing that fixes it definitely in any place, though people have thought that Hawthorne might have had in his mind the "Old Man of the Mountain" or the profile in the Franconia Notch of the White Mountains, for we know that Hawthorne had visited these mountains in his occasional rambles from home. There are passages tracing the character of Old Stony Phiz that make one think of Webster, and Emerson might almost have sat for the portrait of Ernest. But we have no right to assume that his characters were meant to typify any persons whom Hawthorne had known in actual life.

7. PURPOSE AND LESSON. Enough has been said to make very clear the purpose Hawthorne had in his mind when he wrote the story. It was apparent in his forecast of the plot, and the lesson for the reader will not be made more clear by comment or strengthened by explanation.



The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Narrative Poetry

Any narrative poem is first of all a story, and before the reader can fully appreciate it in all its literary beauty, he must make himself acquainted with it in the same way that we have studied *The Great Stone Face*.

The example we take for analysis is in most striking contrast to the story we have just discussed, and it illustrates forcibly how heavy are the demands sometimes made upon a reader's imagination.

The Ancient Mariner may not be a perfect type of the narrative poem, but it has a distinct plot upon which hangs much of the weird interest the poem creates. We will read it this time for the story, omitting for the once any serious consideration of its troubled philosophy and uncanny suggestion. Make preliminary preparation for this as for *The Great Stone Face* by reading the poem from the beginning continuously to the end. In reading do not try to make any explanation of the supernatural events. Let your imagination run riot, and for the time believe in all the weird creations. Later, if you wish, you can attempt to harmonize it with real life and try to understand its import.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

PART I

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
“By thy long gray beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp’st thou me ?

“The bridegroom’s doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set :
May’st hear the merry din.”

He holds him with a skinny hand,
“There was a ship,” quoth he.
“Hold off ! unhand me, gray-beard loon !”
Eftsoons¹ his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-guest stood still,
And listens like a three years’ child:
The Mariner hath his will.

1. Quickly.

NOTE. Coleridge printed an explanatory prose narrative in quaint style and broken sentences, in the margin of the poem. It was omitted here because it interfered somewhat with the purpose for which we use the poem.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

The Wedding-guest sat on a stone :
He can not choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner :—

The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top,

The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he !
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon—
The Wedding-guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she ;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-guest he beat his breast,
Yet he can not choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner :—

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

And now the storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong :
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who² pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,

The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.
And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold :
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

And through the drifts, the snowy cliffs³
Did send a dismal sheen :
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around :
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swoon !⁴

2. As [one] who is pursued.

3. Cliffs—cliffs are cleft rocks.

4. Like noises [one hears] in a swoon.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

At length did cross an Albatross,
Thorough⁵ the fog it came ;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit ;
The helmsman steered us through.

And a good south wind sprung up behind ;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner's hollo !

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine ;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moonshine.

“God save thee, ancient Mariner,
From the fiends that plague thee thus ! —
Why look'st thou so ? ” — With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross.⁶

5. Through. *Thorough* to preserve the meter.

6. A great sea-bird, the largest known. It sometimes follows a ship for days without resting.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

PART II

The sun now rose upon the right
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in the mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariner's hollo !

And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe :
For all averred I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow,—
Ah wretch ! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow.

Nor dim, nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious sun uprist :⁷
Then all averred I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

7. Uprose.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free ;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be ;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea !

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,⁸
No bigger than the moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion ;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink ;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot : O Christ !
That ever this should be !
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

8. Where is the ship now ?

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

About, about, in reel and rout⁹
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue, and white.

And some in dreams assured were
Of the spirit that plagued us so;
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

Ah ! well a day ! what evil looks
Had I from old and young !
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

9. A confused and whirling dance.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

PART III

There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time ! a weary time !
How glazed each weary eye !
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist :
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.¹⁰

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist !
And still it neared and neared :
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged, and tacked, and veered.

With throats unslacked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail ;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood !
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail ! a sail !

With throats unslacked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call :

^{10.} Knew.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

Gramercy ! ¹¹ they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

See ! see ! (I cried) she tacks no more !
Hither to work us weal ;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel !

The western wave was all a-flame,
The day was well-nigh done !
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad, bright sun ;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the sun.

And straight the sun was flecked with bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us grace !)
As if through a dungeon grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

Alas ! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears !
Are those her sails that glance in the sun,
Like restless gossamer ¹²es ?

Are those her ribs through which the sun
Did peer, as through a grate ?

11. An exclamation derived from the French *grand merci*, great thanks.

12. Films like cobwebs, seen floating in the air in summer.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? and are there two?
Is Death that woman's mate?

Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The night-mare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thickens man's blood with cold.

The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
"The game is done! I've won, I've won!"
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

The sun's rim dips: the stars rush out:
At one stride comes the dark;¹³
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed
white;
From the sails the dew did drip —
Till clomb¹⁴ above the eastern bar

13. In the tropics there is little or no twilight.

14. Climbed.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

The horned moon,¹⁵ with one bright star
Within the the nether tip.

One by one, by the star-dogged moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

The souls did from their bodies fly,—
They fled to bliss or woe !
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whiz of my cross-bow !

15. The waning moon.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

PART IV

“I fear thee, ancient Mariner !
I fear thy skinny hand !
And thou art long, and lank and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand so brown.”
Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-guest !
This body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea !
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

The many men, so beautiful !
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand, thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray
But or ever a prayer had gusht,

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the
sky,
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh ! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man's eye !
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

The moving moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside —

Her beams bemock'd the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

O happy, living things ! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

PART V

O sleep ! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole !
To Mary Queen the praise be given !
She sent the gentle sleep from heaven,
That slid into my soul.

The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light — almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

The upper air burst into life !
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about !
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge :
And the rain poured down from one black
cloud :
The moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The moon was at its side :
Like water shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on !
Beneath the lightning and the moon
The dead men gave a groan.

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes ;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

The helmsman steered; the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze up blew;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee :
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said naught to me.

“I fear thee, ancient Mariner !”
Be calm, thou Wedding-guest !
'T was not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest :

For when it dawned— they dropped their
arms,
And clustered round the mast ;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the sun ;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the sky-lark sing ;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning !

And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute ;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased ; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe :
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid : and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

The sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean:
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short, uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short, uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swoon.

How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard, and in my soul discerned,
Two voices in the air.

“Is it he?” quoth one, “Is this the man?
By him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

“The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.”

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, “The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.”

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

PART VI

FIRST VOICE

But tell me, tell me ! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing —
What makes that ship drive on so fast ?
What is the ocean doing ?

SECOND VOICE

Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast ;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the moon is cast —

If he may know which way to go ;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see ! how graciously
She looketh down on him.

FIRST VOICE

But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind ?

SECOND VOICE

The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

Fly, brother, fly ! more high, more high !
Or we shall be belated :

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the mariner's trance is abated.

I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather :
' T was night, calm night, the moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon¹⁶ fitter:
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen —

Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;

16. A vault or chamber underneath or near a church, where the bones of the dead are laid.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze —
On me alone it blew.

Oh ! dream of joy ! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see ?
Is this the hill ? is this the kirk ?
Is this mine own countree ?

We drifted o 'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray —
O let me be awake, my God !
Or let me sleep alway.

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn !

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent light,
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were :
I turned my eyes upon the deck—
O Christ ! what saw I there !

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood ! ¹⁷
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand :
It was a heavenly sight !
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light ;

This seraph-band, each waved his hand :
No voice did they impart—

^{17.} Holy Cross.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

No voice ; but oh ! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the Pilot's cheer ;
The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast :
Dear Lord in Heaven ! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third — I heard his voice :
It is the Hermit good !
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

PART VII

This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears !
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve —
He hath a cushion plump :
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared : I heard them talk,
“ Why, this is strange, I trow !
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now ? ”

“ Strange, by my faith ! ” the Hermit said —
“ And they answered not our cheer.
The planks look warped ! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere !
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

“ Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest brook along ;

· The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

When the ivy-tod¹⁸ is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young."

"Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look —
(The Pilot made reply)
I am a-feared" — "Push on, push on!"
Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred ;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread :
It reached the ship, it split the bay ;
The ship went down like lead.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat ;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round ;

18. Thick clump of ivy.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips — the Pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit;
The Holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars : the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
“ Ha ! ha ! ” quoth he, “ full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.”

And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land !
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

“ O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man ! ”
The Hermit crossed his brow.
“ Say quick,” quoth he, “ I bid thee say —
What manner of man art thou ? ”

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woeful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns :
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door !
The Wedding-guests are there :
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bridemaids singing are :
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer !

O Wedding-guest ! This soul hath been
Alone on a wide, wide sea :
So lonely 't was, that God himself
Scarce seeméd there to be.

O sweeter than the marriage feast,
'T is sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company !

To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay !

Farewell, farewell ! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-guest !
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast,

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone : and now the Wedding-guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn :
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

Study of the Ancient Mariner

Study of The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

This time we will not divide our discussion by the several topics of the outline, but will cover the points in continuous narration. As far as possible verify or successfully contradict from the poem the statements and conclusions that follow.

A more weird and striking creation than Coleridge's Ancient Mariner is difficult to find. "Long, lank and brown, as is the ribbed sea-sand," with his skinny hand, long gray beard, and glittering eye he passes like night from land to land and tells his tale to the men that should hear him. Despite its confusing and uncanny setting the story is a simple one: He kills a bird of good omen and in so doing offends its guardian spirit. His shipmates for a penalty hang the dead body about his neck, the spirit follows the ship and takes its revenge. All the sailors but the offender die of thirst. In a moment of admiration for the beauty of the water snakes he blesses them unawares and the bird falls from his neck into the sea. The mariner's life is spared, but bitter remorse continues as his punishment.

By a happy choice of quaint expressions and solemn forms of speech, and by the use of rare and obsolete words Coleridge manages to give an

Study of The Ancient Mariner

atmosphere perfectly in harmony with his principal characters. Then he introduces supernatural creatures: Two voices discuss the causes of the marvelous voyage of the ship. Death and a fearful specter with skin as white as leprosy cast dice for the mariner's fate. Seraphs reanimate the bodies of the sailors. A spirit from the land of mist and snow follows the ship nine fathoms deep. The ship moves on "without or wind or wave," and reaches the harbor from which it sailed "though now its sails are thin and sere" like —

" Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest brook along;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young."

The mariner tells his story within hearing of the wedding feast. The ship sails to the south and enters the land of mist and snow where ice, mast high and green as emerald, floats by; it returns to the tropics and in the zone of calms lies idle "as a painted ship upon a painted ocean." By means of these most vivid descriptions the reader sees the ice-bound ocean, the rotting sea, the beautiful phosphorescence, the moonlit harbor. Some of the musical descriptive lines haunt one's memory, and the pictures they raise are never effaced: —

Study of The Ancient Mariner

“And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:”

“All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody sun at noon,”

“The sun’s rim dips; the stars rush out:
At one stride comes the dark.”

Perhaps no one scene is more vivid than the one which is described in Part IV. Then, after the horror of that awful voyage what peace rests upon the little harbor at home:—

“The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn !
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.”

The story is intensely dramatic at times, as when the mariner having described the albatross and the good luck it brought, seems overcome by some fearful recollection and pauses in his narrative.

“God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends that plague thee thus!—
Why lookest thou so? ”—

Study of The Ancient Mariner

Coleridge indulges in no description, does not even interrupt the musical flow of the stanza, but makes the mariner abruptly close that part of the poem with the startling announcement, "With my cross-bow I shot the Albatross."

These are but a few of the things that go to make this poem so remarkable. To give so convincing an air of reality to what is wholly imaginary is a mark of genius, and surely there could be no more effective way of presenting the lesson than this :—

"Farewell, farewell ! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-guest !
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small ;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."



Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

1772-1834

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was one of the most remarkable figures of English Literature. He was constitutionally awkward in his carriage and manners, and seemed altogether lacking in physical energy, yet he possessed a personal magnetism that drew about him a group of friends who became almost his disciples. The poet Southey was the warmest of these, and when Coleridge, unable to provide for his family, meanly abandoned them, it was Southey who took their support upon himself. For a period of seventeen years Coleridge was a slave to opiates, and during this time he became wholly unreliable and lost most of his power to write, though he could talk fluently and delightfully. After he put himself entirely into the hands of a London physician, whose judicious and kindly care was a remarkable testimony to the attractiveness of Coleridge, he recovered much of his former power. He lived for some years with Southey and Wordsworth in the beautiful lake region of northern England, and formed with them what is known as the Lake School of Poetry, characterized by a sympathetic interpretation of nature.

The Ancient Mariner was begun by Wordsworth and Coleridge working together, but the vivid im-

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

agination of the latter caught the idea of the piece more firmly and worked it out in all its beautiful details. In the poem as it finally appeared, Wordsworth contributed but a few trifling lines besides the following: —

“And listens like a three years’ child :
The Mariner hath his will.”

“And thou art long, and lank and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.”

Wordsworth says he suggested that “some crime was to be committed which should bring upon the Old Navigator as Coleridge afterwards delighted to call him, the spectral persecution, as a consequence of that crime and his own wanderings. I had been reading in Shelvocke’s *Voyages*, a day or two before, that while doubling Cape Horn they frequently saw albatrosses in that latitude, the largest sort of sea fowl, some extending their wings twelve or thirteen feet. ‘Suppose,’ said I, ‘you represent him as having killed one of these birds on entering the South Sea, and that the tutelary spirits of these regions take upon them to avenge the crime.’ The incident was thought fit for the purpose and adopted accordingly. I also suggested the navigation of the ship by the dead men, but do not recollect that I had anything more to do with the scheme of the poem.”

The Ancient Mariner was published in *Lyrical Ballads*, a book which marked an epoch in litera-

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

ture, as it showed a strong tendency away from the formalism of the past and toward a natural realism tempered by graceful imagination. Most of the poems in the little volume were by Wordsworth.

The wonderful genius of Coleridge showed itself when he was a boy, and it was of him that Charles Lamb wrote: "Come back into memory like as thou wast in the dayspring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee — the dark pillar not yet turned — Samuel Taylor Coleridge, logician, metaphysician, bard! How have I seen the casual passer through the cloisters stand still, entranced with admiration (while he weighed the disproportion between the *speech* and the *garb*) . . . to hear thee unfold, in thy deep, sweet intonations the mysteries of the philosophers . . . or reciting Homer in his Greek, or Pindar, while the walls of the old Grayfriars re-echoed to the accents of the inspired charity boy." His incomplete life was owing to his diseased will, against the weakness of which he struggled. When his publisher remonstrated he wrote, "You have poured oil in the raw and festering wounds of an old friend's conscience, Cottle! — but it is oil of vitriol! I have prayed with drops of agony on my brow, trembling not only before the justice of my Master, but even before the mercy of my Redeemer: 'I gave thee so many talents; what hast thou done with them?'"

In spite of his weakness and the incompleteness

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

of his work, he was an influence as a critic, a poet, a philosopher, and a theologian.

“He suffered an almost lifelong punishment for his errors, whilst the world at large has the unwithering fruits of his labors and his genius and his sufferings.”

Nothing can surpass the melodious richness of words which he heaps around his images,—images not glaring in themselves, but which are always affecting to the very verge of tears, because they have all been formed and nourished in the recesses of one of the most deeply musing spirits that ever breathed forth its inspirations in the majestic language of England.

—*John Wilson.*

Memoranda

To the Student:

The following blank pages are useful for various purposes. Upon some you can paste such fugitive literary scraps as are worth saving from the papers. You can copy upon others attractive quotations, criticisms and such general notes as are worthy. You can record upon a few pages the most interesting of your studies and your own opinions of some of the selections you have read. Years later you will find it enjoyable to refer to these memoranda.

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